

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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R 171910Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7782
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

S E C R E T BONN 07123

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, GW, UR
SUBJECT: EGON BAHR VISIT TO SOVIET UNION

REFERENCE: BONN 6168

1. A CHANCELLERY SOURCE HAS TOLD US THAT EGON BAHR, WHO ARRIVES IN MOSCOW ON APRIL 17 FOR A THREE-DAY VISIT, WILL DISCUSS ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE BREZHNEV VISIT. OUR SOURCE NOTED THAT BAHR IS A CLOSE ADVISOR TO SCHMIDT ON OSTPOLITIK, PARTICULARLY SOVIET AFFAIRS.

2. THE SPD HAS ANNOUNCED THAT BAHR, WHO IS OSTENSIBLY IN MOSCOW FOR TALKS ON THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE, WILL MEET WITH MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND WITH GEORGI ARBATOV.

3. COMMENT: BAHR'S ROLE IN PLANNING FOR THE BREZHNEV VISIT CAN HARDLY BE A WELCOME DEVELOPMENT FOR GENSCHER AND THE FOREIGN OFFICE. WE BELIEVE BAHR WILL GO WELL BEYOND ECONOMIC QUESTIONS DURING HIS VISIT. BAHR, AS WELL AS BRANDT AND WEHNER, ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO "MOVEMENT" IN DETENTE (SOME THINK TO THE DETRIMENT OF PROGRESS) AND HE WILL WISH TO MAKE BREZHNEV'S VISIT A
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POLITICAL SUCCESS. AS WE NOTED IN REFTTEL, THE SOVIETS WILL SEE IN BAHR A SYMPATHETIC CHANNEL TO SCHMIDT AND MAY WELL CHOSE TO USE HIM ON SENSITIVE ISSUES RATHER THAN THE FOREIGN OFFICE, WHOSE CHIEF IS CONSIDERED AN ADVERSARY. ON THE OTHER HAND, SCHMIDT, WHO OBVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED BAHR'S MISSION, WILL BE CAREFUL NOT TO TEST THE LIMITS OF GENSCHER'S TOLERATION OF SPD

INVOLVEMENT IN FOREIGN POLICY. MOREOVER, SOME SPD
LEADERS, APPARENTLY DUBIOUS ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR
SUBSTANTIVE MOVEMENT IN FRG-SOVIET RELATIONS, MAY ALSO
SEEK TO RESTRAIN THE BAHR FACTION. MUCH DEPENDS ON THE
ROOM FOR GENUINE MANEUVER THAT MOSCOW IS PREPARED TO
OFFER.
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